

VILLAGE-GREEN MAGIC

By Sam Hollis

There is something quintessentially English about cricket. The Saturday afternoon game brings an image of gleaming sunshine, buoyant children and strawberry picnics. While history lends us this ideological view of the game, today's busy society makes enjoying cricket somewhat harder – it seems most people are unaware that a high-standard game of cricket is right on their doorstep, and available for free. Sam Hollis explores the importance of local sport in the Holme Valley.

In every community, the village cricket field is as much part of the landscape as the local church, or, to bring it up to date, the Tesco Express. Holmfirth is no different, with the location of the ground central to the town. The cricket season is upon us once more, and every Saturday afternoon Bridge Fold will host a 50-overs-per-side game in an ideal location for cricket.



Twinned with a Sunday league football pitch a mere hundred yards from the cricket pitch, Bridge Fold has been hosting sporting occasions on a weekly basis for over a hundred years. In the approaching route to this hidden location, an old foundry confirms the historic aspect to this sporting venue and perhaps suggests that workers used the land to enjoy their time off work.

As a passionate cricket follower, my fear is that many people still feel cricket is a typically upper-class English sport, and this distracts them from enjoying many aspects it brings. Once you negotiate the tricky journey to the ground

(hidden behind the local Co-op down a conspicuous-looking alley), a stunning location is revealed with well-maintained turf. Most importantly perhaps, there are plenty of places to sit and enjoy the game in a friendly atmosphere. Why not bring a picnic? Just try to keep the dog away from it!

If you are not busy on a weekend, try to visit Bridge Fold. You cannot only enjoy a pint in the clubhouse, but also cheer on your local side. There is a fantastic atmosphere on a matchday - the honesty and respect between teams is rarely matched in other sports - and there are also benefits for supporters. What better way to spend a day than in the gorgeous summer sunshine. Local cricket allows people to see a high quality of cricket for absolutely free.

It is important to get young children involved in this type of sporting activity from an early age. I still remember the times my father took me to my local park, he would watch the cricket while me and my brother played our own (equally important) game using a poor tree as a wicket – which by conventional rules must have been far too wide and there was certainly no room for any bails! Nevertheless, it promoted a healthy and lively lifestyle, while we had a great time.

Holmfirth CC are set to stage an annual open day at their ground to promote this. Bridge Fold will host the Pendragon Charity Tournament, which is an ideal opportunity to get you and the children down to the club to watch a mini-competition – with refreshments, raffles and alcohol for parents and a bouncy castle to keep the children entertained. All to raise money for McMillan Cancer Support. Six teams will battle it out in short matches for the prestigious Pendragon Cup, so come along and enjoy the fun! Hopefully sun cream will be required!

Holmfirth are in the elite division in the Huddersfield League, and since the league began in 1891, the club is one of four co-founders still involved. So get down to Bridge Fold and support the team in their bid to win the Drakes Huddersfield Cricket League this season.